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THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO ANALYZE THE REASONS GIVEN FOR ENTERING SELECTED OCCUPATIONS BY A SAMPLE OF 985 WHITE AND NEGRO NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS COMPRISED OF 271 WHITE MALES, 315 WHITE FEMALES, 167 NEGRO MALES, AND 232 NEGRO FEMALES. QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED IN A CLASSROOM SETTING PROVIDED DATA ON STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND BACKGROUND. THE MAJORITY OF REASONS GIVEN FOR OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS WERE CATEGORIZED AS GENERAL INTEREST. MORE MALE THAN FEMALE STUDENTS BUT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO AND WHITE BOYS GAVE REWARD AS A REASON FOR ENTERING THE EXPECTED OCCUPATION. FEMALES CHOSE OCCUPATIONS FOR ALTRUISTIC REASONS ALMOST FOUR TIMES MORE THAN MALES, AND THE NEGRO FEMALE WAS MORE ALTRUISTIC THAN ANY OTHER GROUP. THE NEGRO MALE RESPONDED TO ALTRUISTIC REASONS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN THE WHITE MALES. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REASONS GUIDING WHITE AND NEGRO STUDENTS AND MALE AND FEMALES INTO THEIR EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS. (MS)

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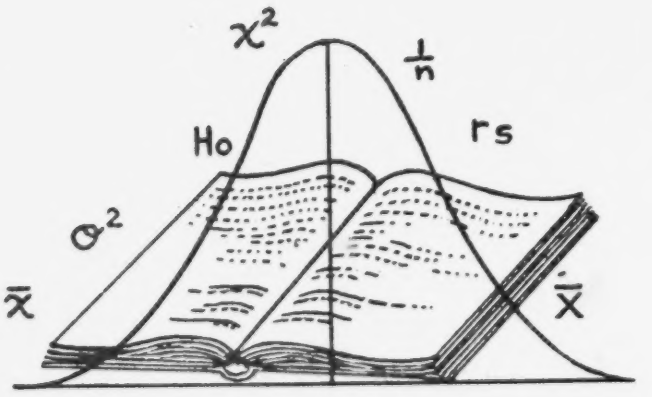
REASONS FOR SELECTION OF EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS: BY RACE AND SEX



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REASONS FOR SELECTION OF EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS: BY RACE AND SEX

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REASONS FOR SELECTION OF EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS: BY RACE AND SEX

A large number of young Americans are preparing to enter the world of work — to choose a lifetime vocation. Each year several million of them offer their services as beginning workers.[1] Each of these young men and women has certain interests[2] and motives which help guide his aspiration to a given occupation, a given work role.

The socialization process is a structural force which among other things helps to develop occupational interest in youth. Exposure to differing socialization factors would be expected to produce variant occupational aspirations and to result in various motivations for selection of specific occupations.

Due to membership in different groups and differences in interpersonal relationships, the socialization process varies for male and female. Differences in the social environment of white and Negro youth likewise affect the socialization of each.

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1 The reader is referred to the following sources for statistics pertinent to this statement: United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Progress of Public Education in the United States of America, 1962-63, Government Printing Office, Washington, District of Columbia, 1963, p. 6; United States Department of Labor, Manpower Report of the President and a Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization and Training, Government Printing Office, Washington, District of Columbia, 1963, p. 156; United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Welfare Administration, Division of Research, Converging Social Trends and Emerging Social Problems, Government Printing Office, Washington, District of Columbia, 1964, p. 43.

2 Interests are simply activities which are liked.

Variation in socialization resulting from differential role preparation and heterogeneity of the social environment would be expected to cause occupational choice and selection distinctions.

Findings of other studies have indicated differences in the occupations to which young people from various social positions aspire. Likewise, there is support for an assumption that the reasons given by people for selecting occupations vary according to the social positions in which they are found.

A few years ago, Glenn pointed out that some types of occupations were more desirable to Negroes than to whites.[3]

Gaier and Wambach, in a study to assess differences in the self-evaluation of personality assets and liabilities of southern white and Negro students, found that white males showed significantly fewer socially oriented responses than did either white females or Negroes.[4]

Recently Chansky found that Negro youth were more interested than Caucasians in occupations in which interpersonal relations were essential and in occupations which emphasize social-interaction.[5]

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3 Glenn, Norval D., "Changes in the American Occupational Structure and Occupational Gains of the Negroes During the 1940's," Social Forces, Vol. 41, December 1962, pp. 188-195.

4 Gaier, Eugene L., and Helen S. Wambach, "Self-Evaluation of Personality Assets and Liabilities of Southern White and Negro Students," The Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 51, 1960, pp. 135-143.

5 Chansky, Norman M., "Race, Aptitude and Vocational Interests," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 63, April 1965, pp. 780-785.

It appears from these studies that there are race differences in desirability of certain occupations. The following studies have pointed out that there are also sex differences in selection of an occupation.

Sprey has related sex differences among Negro adolescents in choice of occupation patterns.[6]

In another study, girls perceived themselves as being more sociable than boys.[7]

Singer and Stefflre found that job values and desires were significantly related to the sex of the individual respondent. In their study they found that 18 percent of the female sample, contrasted with only six percent of the male sample, indicated their first choice of an occupation was a "job where they could help other people."[8]

The School as a Socializing Agent

Almost without exception, societies establish training systems to insure that individuals will possess the requisite skills and motives to be successful in their occupational roles. In the United States, those youth who successfully complete high school attain a high-water mark in this aspect of the socialization process. The high school assists in

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6 Sprey, Jetse, "Sex Differences in Occupational Choice Patterns Among Negro Adolescents," Social Problems, Vol. 10, 1962-63, pp. 11-23.

7 Berdie, Ralph F., and Albert G. Hood, "Personal Values and Attitudes as Determinants of Post-High School Plans," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 62, April 1964, pp. 754-759.

8 Singer, Stanley L., and Buford Stefflre, "Sex and Differences in Job Values and Desires," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 32, 1954, pp. 483-484.

providing insight into occupations as well as developing individual occupational interests.

Conant has indicated concern with the high school years, citing the potent effects they have on the subsequent distribution of occupations. He states further, "the proper distribution of occupations in a modern society is almost the central core of the welfare of that society."[9]

Thus, insight into the reasons which orient the high school individual in selecting an occupation becomes important to sociology -- important due to the extended period of time the individual engages in an occupational role and to the partial derivation of his social rank from his work.

Empirical Considerations

This paper is concerned with the reasons given by a sample of high school seniors for selection of their expected occuations. Choosing an occupation is one of the preliminary steps in "career development."[10]

It is asserted that a variety of reasons lead a young American into an occupation but that the reasons may be categorized in three main

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9 Conant, James B., "Selection and Guidance in the Secondary School -- A Symposium," Harvard Educational Review, Spring 1948, Vol. 18, p. 62.

10 "Career development": a concept which has been contributed to describe the complex process of an individual getting jobs during his life -- specifically it refers to the total pattern of jobs held during a worker's lifetime. See Baer, Max F., and Edward C. Roeber, Occupational Information, Science Research Council Associates, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, 1964, for further enlightenment.

areas: general interest, reward, and altruism.[11] Reasons for occupational entry may be placed into such a scheme, then compared with regard to race and sex differences.

The reasons given for selection of a particular occupation are related to social-structure factors connected with the socialization process. Although each individual will have his own personal reasons for entering an occupation, socialization with its profound effect will give rise to differences between reasons presented by males and females for entering an expected occupation. There will also be differences in reasons for occupational selection between races due to differing socialization patterns.

Submitted here are two general hypotheses:

1. The reasons given for entry into an occupation will differ by race.
2. The reasons given for entry into an occupation will differ by sex.

Setting of the Study and Methodology

This report is a secondary analysis of a portion of a recent questionnaire study of aspirations of North Carolina senior high school students.[12] Data were gathered from 1,068 high school seniors in 23

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11 Altruism is implied behavior which shows primary regard for the interest of others or the social group.

12 This report stems from research elsewhere reported in Lawrence W. Drabick, The Vocational Agriculture Student and His Peers, Educational Research Series Number 1, 1963, a joint study of the Department of Agricultural Education and the Department of Rural Sociology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

North Carolina high schools[13] -- 12 white and 11 Negro -- During the spring of 1963.

The sample of the present study is composed of 985 high school seniors of whom there are 271 white males, 315 white females, 167 Negro males, and 232 Negro females. (Eighty-three students did not give a reason for entering an expected occupation; therefore, they were not included in this study.)

Questionnaire forms were completed during school hours in a classroom setting and were designed to provide data concerning three facets of occupational and educational desires and expectations of North Carolina students:

1. Occupational aspirations of the students
2. Educational aspirations of the students
3. Insight into the background of the students which would aid in understanding the decisions to which they had come

In the questionnaire, the student was asked to name the job he actually expected to enter when he completed his education.[14] This question was followed by, "What is the most important reason why you expect to enter that job or position?" Replies to the latter have been grouped into a four-by-four contingency table under categories of

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13 These high schools were chosen to be representative of those schools with comprehensive curricula in the nonmetropolitan economic areas of the state of North Carolina.

14 The fact that these respondents were seniors is quite important in relying on their choice as a dependable one -- see Williamson, E.G., and J. C. Darley, "Trends in the Occupational Choices of High School Seniors," Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 14, 1935, pp. 361-370.

general interest, reward, altruism, and other (a residual category containing a variety of reasons which allows statistical testing of the sample), together with race-sex categories.

This was done in order to compare differences in response categorized general interest, reward, and altruism given by each of the race-sex categories. Percent response of reasons for entering the expected occupation was computed for each of the categories, and a chi-square analysis was applied to each of the null hypotheses to determine if differences involved were due to chance.

Findings

Data from Table 1 indicate that there are salient differences in occupational choice reasons given by the race-sex categories in the sample.

TABLE 1. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN BY NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS FOR SELECTION OF EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS, BY RACE AND SEX[1]

Reasons	White		Negro	
	Male (N=271)	Female (N=315)	Male (N=167)	Female (N=232)
General interest	78.2	78.1	72.4	60.8
Reward	15.1	7.6	15.6	4.7
Altruism	1.8	9.8	10.2	33.2
Other[2]	4.8	4.4	1.8	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1 Chi-square analysis was significant at the .001 level of significance for both race and sex. They are included together here to enable succinct comparison.

2 Included in this category are various reasons such as: do not know, influence of other persons, knowledge about the occupation, and opening available.

In order to clarify the differences, two separate twc-by-four contingency tables were prepared: Table 2 is a comparison by race; Table 3 presents a comparison by sex.

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN BY NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS FOR ENTERING EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS, BY RACE

Reasons	White (N=586)	Negro (N=399)
General interest	78.2	65.7
Reward	11.1	9.3
Altruism	6.1	23.6
Other	4.6	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN BY NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS FOR ENTERING EXPECTED OCCUPATIONS, BY SEX

Reasons	Male (N=438)	Female (N=547)
General interest	76.0	70.8
Reward	15.3	6.4
Altruism	5.0	19.7
Other	3.7	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0

In order to contrast the reasons given by the students for selecting expected occupations, each choice classification has been analyzed separately.

General Interest. Responses reflected in Table 1 indicated that almost three-fourths of the sample gave reasons of general interest for entering the expected occupations. This was expected as other studies have indicated the majority of people give reasons of general interest for entering an occupation. Almost identical proportions of the white male and female students gave reasons of general interest for the expected occupation, but for the Negro students this was not the case -- a larger proportion of Negro males gave reasons of general interest than did Negro females. A little over three-fourths of the white students gave reasons of general interest compared with only a little over two-thirds of the Negro students.

Further, the differences between the percentage of white and Negro females who gave reasons of general interest is more striking than the difference between the percentage of white and Negro males who gave reasons in this category.

Reward. Table 3 points out that exaggerated differences occurred between sex categories with respect to reasons of reward given by the students for entering the expected occupation. More male than female students gave such reasons. A slightly larger percentage of white students gave reasons of reward than did Negro students. Notable results in Table 1 are that equal percentages of white and Negro male students gave reasons of reward; whereas, for females, roughly half as many Negroes gave reasons in this category as did whites.

Altruism. Table 1 shows that significant differences occurred between race as well as sex classes with respect to this category.

Female responses were more prominent in this category, being almost four times those of males. It is discernible from Table 1 that Negro females in the study gave a greater percentage of reasons of altruism than did the other three race-sex classes combined. Very striking was the difference between the female classes — the percentage of white females was less than one-third of the percentage of Negro females who gave reasons of altruism. The percentages of white females and Negro males giving reasons of altruism for the expected occupations were approximately equal. Most of the differences in this category arose from the commitment of the Negro females.

Other. This small residual category is not considered meaningful to this analysis as the percent responses included was small and the reasons diverse. However, for completeness, Table 3 shows that the percentages contrasted by sex were almost equal with regard to reasons categorized as "other" for selection of occupations. There was greater difference by race as the white students gave somewhat more than three times the percentage of reasons categorized as "other" as given by Negro students.

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the reasons given for entering selected occupations by a sample of white and Negro North Carolina high school seniors. The central thesis of this study was to classify the reasons given and to compare them with regard to race and sex.

As was anticipated from the findings of similar studies, the majority of reasons were categorized as general interest. White students in the sample gave a slightly larger percentage of general interest reasons than did Negroes; likewise, males in the sample gave a slightly higher percentage of reasons of general interest than did females.

It is postulated that this situation is accounted for partially by the traditional structuring of occupations according to race and sex. The Negro and the female have occupied positions to which socially structured barriers acted as occupational deterrents. Particularly has this been true for the Negro male. Entry into attractive occupations was not always feasible.

It is surprising that Negro male students gave as many reasons of general interest as they did,for Negro males have not been afforded entry into as wide a range of occupations as have white males or females. But the percentage difference of general interest response between Negro males and white males or females was small. This appears to be a healthy situation, in that entering an occupation for reasons of general interest is common and also seems to be quite logical for selection of an occupation.

It is postulated that white students probably have a greater array of interests into which they may channel their occupational desires but that the situation will probably change as a result of increasing equality of opportunity of employment. Further, because of increasing emphasis upon the worth of the individual which is expressed as a value upon personal happiness, it is posited that in the future the

percentage of reasons of general interest may become even larger when contrasted with other categories of reasons.

Similar percentages of white and Negro students gave reasons of reward for entering the expected occupation. More male students responded with answers in this category than did female students. This category is considered to be a pragmatic one, and those students who responded in this category are, it seems, realistically oriented to their future occupations.

In Table 1 the percentage of white and Negro male students giving reasons of reward is approximately equal. On the basis of this, it seems that the males of the study are more realistic about why they are entering an occupation than is true for females of the study. In a society such as ours, where selfish materialism is a norm, it appears reasonable that the dominant males will be oriented toward reward in an occupation.

Difference in female response is evident, with a smaller percentage of Negro females giving reasons in the category of reward. The implication seems to be that Negro females are less motivated by selfish materialism with regard to selection of an occupation than are respondents of the other sex-race categories.

Response in the category of altruistic reasons is very intriguing. Previous studies have indicated that females enter occupations out of altruistic reasons more than males. This was the case for this sample where the percentage of female response was almost four times that of male students. It is obvious from Table 1 that this mainly was due to

the large percentage of Negro females so responding -- more than three times the percentage of white females.

The very large percentage of Negro females giving reasons of altruism is sociologically very interesting. Numerous studies have pointed out the importance of the Negro female in Negro society. Since the arrival of Negroes in America, the female role has evolved into one in which the problems of her offspring, her spouse, and the white people by whom she was employed have become her problems. This situation may have influenced development of a role oriented toward helping others as the Negro female seems interested in entering occupations which afford her the opportunity to do so. However, in a technologically and highly individualistic social structure, such as the one is which she is found, this desire to help others is not necessarily realistic.

When the percentages of white and Negro males giving altruistic occupational reasoning are contrasted, the difference observed in Table 1 is striking. There it is shown that the percentage of Negro male altruistic response is significantly greater than that of white males.

It is posited that the Negro male and female both are oriented toward entering an occupation for purposes of altruism. This possibly may be a sort of defense -- a way of accepting the existing occupation conditions -- and is not necessarily in the best interests of the individuals involved nor of the society of which they are a part.

The most important conclusions drawn from this study are:

1. There are significant differences* between reasons guiding white and Negro students into their occupations. The Negro sample gave more reasons of altruism and fewer reasons of reward than did the white sample.
2. There are significant differences* between reasons guiding male and female students into their expected occupations. The female sample gave more reasons of altruism and fewer reasons of reward than did the male sample.

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* P = < .001 level of significance.